

CLASSIFICATION ~~SECRET/CONTROL~~ - US OFFICIALS ONLY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Belgium/The Netherlands

DATE DISTR. 19 November 1948

SUBJECT Strike Potential Among Lowlands Dockworkers
25X1A6a

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE
ACQUIRED [REDACTED]NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

25X1X6

1. High Government officials in The Netherlands have interpreted the removal on 8 November of Dutch Government subsidies which have contributed to holding prices well under those in Belgium as a threat to the uninterrupted delivery of ERP supplies through ports in The Netherlands. This action by the Dutch Government is part of the BENELUX plan for abolishing financial and economic barriers among its member countries, but it will inevitably result in a higher cost of living to be borne by the Dutch.
2. Trade unions are already agitating for wage increases. On the estimate that the living expenses of each family in Rotterdam will rise 3.00 florins per week, the Government has proposed a wage increase of 2.00 florins per week. The EVC, the Communist-controlled United Trade Union Central, is demanding 2.50 florins. If this figure is refused by the Government, it will offer effective propaganda to the Communist Party of the Netherlands.
3. Higher prices and almost full employment in Rotterdam may lead to strikes in this port city. All trade unions, except those which are Communist-dominated, have accepted the Government proposal. The EVC now has 12,000 members in Rotterdam, since 4,000 former EVC members broke away to form the OVB, the Independent Trade Union Movement. The OVB membership includes the majority of Rotterdam's dockworkers and transport and harbor workers. The political orientation of the OVB is described as "Titoist and Communist-nationalist" and its policy has been to oppose the EVC at every opportunity. Only a serious rise in the cost of living would induce the OVB, for purely economic and non-political reasons, to join with the EVC in a united strike effort.
4. The total number of dockers in Rotterdam is estimated at 28,000. The Communist vote in this city in the general elections of July 1948 was 12%. There is little known Communist penetration in the non-Communist trade unions, although the EVC has recently been trying to win over the Socialist members of other unions, telling them to remain in their unions, to hide their EVC connections and to form cells. Efforts are constantly being made to discredit the non-Communist union leaders, in some instances causing their removal and replacement by Communist or Communist-controlled heads.

SEE REVERSE FOR DECLASSIFICATION ACTION

WARNING NOTICE: THIS DISTRIBUTION LISTING MUST BE
CLASSIFICATION ~~SECRET/CONTROL~~ - US OFFICIALS ONLY

STATE #	X	NAVY	X	NSRB	EXCLUDED BEFORE PUBLIC RELEASE OF THIS DOCUMENT	
ARMY	X	AIR	X		25X1A9a	25X1A8a

ADSO	X	DOPP	X	FBR		DISTRIBUTION	X
DADSO		DOPC		FBS	X	FBZ	CCD
CLC		FBM		FBT		CTS	CDD
COPS							

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 2 -

5. Rotterdam dockworkers and longshoremen are rigidly checked and controlled. These measures are believed effective in reducing the possibility of sabotage in ship unloading. Also, ships carrying important cargoes are often assigned to a guarded dock where unloading can be done by security-checked workers.
6. The Communist Party is believed to have issued no orders to its members to impede ERP shipments to The Netherlands. The Dutch source quotes Prime Minister Drees as stating that, if strikes should hamper either ERP shipments or Army reinforcements through Dutch ports, the Government will call for volunteers to unload cargoes. If there should not be sufficient volunteers, Dutch troops will be ordered to handle unloading and safe transshipment through The Netherlands.
7. There is fairly widespread unemployment in the Belgian port city of Antwerp, especially among the 800 members of the Ship Repairers' Union, which is believed to lessen the possibility of effective strike action. The Belgian Communist Party, however, is known to have issued orders to the Secretary of its Action Committee, Philips (fnu), to make every effort to slow down ERP shipments into Antwerp, but there are no indications that these orders have been carried out. This Action Committee is believed to consist of important members of various Antwerp unions. Communist Party leaders are believed to have issued a second order to its members to refuse to unload only ships carrying war materials, and Belgian Government officials consider that this instruction may be carried out.
8. There is no security check of dockworkers and longshoremen of Antwerp, which increases the possibility that sabotage may be attempted, rather than strike action. No guarded docks exist in Antwerp, and ships are directed to any Berths which are free, without regard to cargoes or the degree of security involved. Communist influence is strong in the Antwerp section of the AOS, the General Independent Trade Union, to which the majority of the workers at the docks belongs. It is believed by Government officials that the Antwerp trade unions would refuse to unload ships rerouted from Rotterdam, if a strike occurred in the latter port.
9. It is known that a Dutch EVC member, Johannes Booms, is in Antwerp as liaison between the Dutch union and the Belgian AOS. Booms is especially interested in the dockworkers. His courier between Antwerp and Rotterdam is Klaas Vildebock, a Dutch national. The Secretary of the EVC Transport Workers Union, Dirk Kleinsma, is in contact with the Antwerp Action Committee, and the Trotskyist "Spartacists" are reported to have exchanged representatives between Antwerp and Rotterdam.
10. Communist Party "ten-man groups" which have been formed in the East part of Belgium do not yet exist in Antwerp and are unknown in The Netherlands.

SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL

SEE REVERSE FOR DECLASSIFICATION ACTION

Document No. **CONFIDENTIAL**NO CHANGE in Class. ☐☒ DECLASSIFIED

Class. CHANGED TO: TS

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.

Next Review Date: 2008